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FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

MAIN COMMITTEE I

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 29 August 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria)

later: Mr. DEYANOV (Bulgaria)

CONTENTS

Organization of work (continued)

Review of the operation of the Treaty as provided for in its article VIII (3):

B. Security assurances:

(1) Resolution 255 (1968) of the United Nations Security Council

(2) Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

(3) Consideration of proposed agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (proposal by Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

The CHAIRMAN said that, following the open-ended meeting he had held with friends of the Chairman, he proposed that the work of Main Committee I should be divided up among three working groups in accordance with the procedure adopted in 1985. Working Group 1, chaired by Mr. Vaerno (Norway), who was also Vice-Chairman of Main Committee I, would be responsible for reviewing articles I and II and preambular paragraphs 1 to 3 of the Treaty.

Secondly, the Sub-Committee established at the first meeting of Main Committee I, pursuant to the decision taken at the third session of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth Review Conference, had been entrusted with considering sub-item (3) of agenda item 13 B (security assurances), under the chairmanship of Mr. Deyanov (Bulgaria). The mandate of the Sub-Committee was: to consider in detail the substance of the proposed agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (proposal by Nigeria, doc. NPT/CONF.IV/17); to establish the procedure for further action on the proposed agreement; and, lastly, to consider the proposal calling upon the United Nations Security Council to adopt a new resolution on security assurances which would go beyond the provisions of its resolution 255 (1968) (proposal by Egypt, doc. NPT/CONF.IV/31).

The Sub-Committee would report to Main Committee I on its work, to which it could devote two official meetings and as many informal meetings as necessary. Upon completion of its work, the Sub-Committee would become Working Group 2, established by Main Committee I, and would be responsible for drafting the relevant parts of the report of Main Committee I to the Review Conference relating to agenda items 13 A (3) and 13 B (1), (2) and (3). Informal consultations on the drafting of the report were to be carried out simultaneously with the work of the Sub-Committee. Working Group 2 would report to Main Committee I.

Thirdly, Working Group 3, chaired by Mr. Adeyemi (Nigeria), would be responsible for dealing with article VI and preambular paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Treaty.

If he heard no objection, he would take it that those proposals were adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN read out the Committee's programme of work for the following days, which had been adopted without objection, and suggested that the consideration of questions allocated to the Sub-Committee on Security Assurances should continue.

REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE TREATY AS PROVIDED FOR IN ITS ARTICLE VIII (3):

B. SECURITY ASSURANCES:

(1) RESOLUTION 255 (1968) OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

(2) EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSURE NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES AGAINST THE USE OR THREAT OF USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

(3) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED AGREEMENT ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE OR THREAT OF USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (PROPOSAL BY NIGERIA) (NPT/CONF.IV/17) (agenda item 13 B)

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria) recalled that the proposed agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT (NPT/CONF.IV/17) had been submitted on 2 November 1989 by the Government of Nigeria to the Depositary Governments of the NPT, which had, moreover, been requested to organize a conference, to consider that proposal, preferably during the NPT Review Conference.

Nigeria's proposal was complementary to the NPT in that it was designed to allay the anxieties of those non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT whose faith in the Treaty appeared to be eroding because they realized that, by foregoing the nuclear option through their accession to the NPT, they had placed themselves at a permanent military disadvantage and become vulnerable to nuclear intimidation. The adoption of the proposed agreement would restore their confidence in the Treaty by making it more relevant to their security concerns in the present nuclear era. It would also provide a further incentive for States that had not yet done so to accede to the NPT.

The proposed agreement was restricted to States parties to the Treaty and was designed to recognize the sacrifice made by the non-nuclear-weapon States by ensuring that renunciation of the nuclear option was matched by legally binding negative security assurances. States wishing to benefit from such assurances from the Depositary Governments of the NPT should therefore first accede to the Treaty, thus strengthening not only it, but also, and more important, the non-proliferation régime.

Article I of the proposal provided for assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty which did not belong to a military alliance or have any other security arrangements providing for mutual defence with a nuclear-weapon State or, in other words, for the most vulnerable States without the umbrella protection of a nuclear-weapon State. If they were denied the nuclear option, it was only fair to provide them with assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Under article II, non-nuclear-weapon States which belonged to a military alliance, or had other security arrangements providing for mutual defence, with a nuclear-weapon State would undertake not to partake in, or contribute to, any military attack on a nuclear-weapon State party to the agreement or against its allies, parties to the Treaty, except in self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. All non-nuclear-weapon States referred to in that category already came under the nuclear umbrella of nuclear-weapon States.

Article III (3) of the proposed agreement, which suggested that the duration of the agreement should be the same as that of the Treaty, rightly established a direct link between the two instruments.

He recalled that the concept of security assurances had been born in the mid-1960s as a result of ever-growing concern among non-nuclear-weapon States about the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and the acceleration of the nuclear arms race. It was, moreover, directly linked to the NPT, since it was during the NPT negotiations that a formal call had been made for credible and reliable assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The security assurances embodied in Security Council resolution 255 (1968) were positive assurances which envisaged the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons before assistance would be provided. That resolution merely reaffirmed the existing Charter obligations to provide assistance or support to a country which had been attacked, irrespective of the type of weapons used. As a nuclear attack could come only from nuclear-weapon States, all of which were permanent members of the Security Council with veto powers, any decision concerning military or other action against a delinquent State would be impossible, since it was unlikely that an aggressor would consent to a collective action against itself.

Moreover, the negative security assurances provided unilaterally by nuclear-weapon States had not solved the problem, since, as Ambassador Alfaragi of Egypt had pointed out, unilateral declarations by their very nature implied that those who had pledged them could also repudiate them. Such assurances therefore had to be contained in a binding international legal instrument. Only on that basis would the Sub-Committee be able to make progress in its work.

The consideration of the question of negative security assurances in other international bodies and, in particular, the Conference on Disarmament had not been productive, as the nuclear-weapon States preferred not to go beyond their unilateral declarations, while some non-nuclear-weapon States that were not parties to the NPT preferred to play the role of dog in the manger. It was against that background that his delegation had submitted the proposed agreement for effective consideration. It also suggested that the following proposal should be incorporated in the final document of the Review Conference: "Within the context of the proposal submitted in November 1989 on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, it was proposed to convene a conference, not later than 1991, in order to conclude an agreement aimed at assuring non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

Since the Committee did not have enough time to consider the Nigerian proposal in depth, more effective consideration within the framework of the NPT would be necessary at a later date.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt), introducing document NPT/CONF.IV/31, said that it was a revised version of the working paper already submitted by Egypt at the third session of the Preparatory Committee, but it took account of the many views expressed by delegations at that session. Moreover, since Egypt fully supported the proposed agreement submitted by Nigeria on negative security assurances, it had carefully deleted from its working paper any reference that might wrongly be regarded as being in contradiction with the Nigerian proposal. That question was essential for all non-nuclear-weapon States and Egypt had preferred to avoid any reference to negative security assurances.

With regard to the question of the universality of the NPT, which was dealt with in one of the chapters of the Egyptian document, it must be borne in mind that, since 1974, Egypt had submitted each year to the General Assembly, initially in conjunction with Iran and then alone, a proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The General Assembly had finally adopted a resolution on the topic in 1980. Quite recently, the President of Egypt had proposed an initiative which had taken account of the circumstances in the Middle East and had requested that the region should be recognized as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. His delegation hoped that the need to establish such zones would be mentioned in terms acceptable to all delegations in the final document of the Conference.

With regard to the universality of the non-proliferation régime, Egypt had proposed the initiation of an informal dialogue between the States parties to the NPT and States non-party to it and hoped that those consultations would give fresh impetus to the nuclear disarmament process. As far as international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was concerned, Egypt called on all States parties to the NPT fully to support the activities of IAEA, in particular by providing it with increased financial support.

As to negative security assurances, his delegation fully endorsed the proposal by Nigeria and considered that what was needed was an international instrument which was legally binding on the three nuclear-weapon Depositary States and which should be drawn up as quickly as possible. Furthermore, many non-nuclear-weapon States could still be threatened by States other than the three Depositary States or the five States which were officially nuclear-weapon States and which were, moreover, members of the Security Council. Twenty years after the entry into force of the NPT, a large number of nuclear threshold countries had still not become parties to the Treaty and had shown no intention of doing so. In the preamble to resolution 255 (1968), the Security Council had actually taken into consideration the concern of certain non-nuclear-weapon States that appropriate measures should be undertaken to safeguard their security, but it should be recalled that the resolution as a whole had been proposed only by the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, and not by the

five official nuclear-weapon States, and that it had been adopted with five abstentions. In addition, operative paragraph 1 did not take account at all of the extent and seriousness of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, whereas it would have been appropriate for the Security Council to commit itself to adopting appropriate and firm measures in the event of a threat to the peace, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter and, in particular, its Article 42. In paragraph 2 of resolution 255 (1968), the Security Council also did not commit itself to taking the necessary measures and merely welcomed "the intention expressed by certain States" to provide assistance to any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty that was a victim of an act or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons were used. Lastly, the reference in paragraph 3 of the resolution to Article 51 of the Charter was superfluous, as the principle enunciated had always been embodied in contemporary international law. His delegation therefore considered that the Security Council should be invited to adopt a new resolution containing credible assurances that went beyond the provisions of resolution 255 (1968) in order to take account of the peril emanating from the practice of certain nuclear threshold countries of an undeclared and ambiguous nuclear policy against their regional neighbours. The new resolution should also provide for assistance of all kinds, whether technical, political, humanitarian or economic, to victims.

Mr. SOP (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that, as long as the nuclear Powers were authorized to manufacture nuclear weapons and disarmament was not achieved, it was logical for the NPT to contain security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. It was therefore regrettable that, in the 20 years since the Treaty had entered into force, the legitimate calls for security assurances had not been fully satisfied. At present, even if the doctrine of confrontation had been done away with, there was no proof that the nuclear Powers did not intend to continue to exercise political and military influence over certain non-nuclear-weapon States, thus helping to destabilize certain regions. For that reason, it was more important than ever to ensure the balanced implementation and extension of the Treaty and to provide universal and unconditional security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

His delegation supported Nigeria's proposal and endorsed the working paper submitted by Egypt, as well as the draft resolution submitted by the Group of Non-Aligned and Other States (NPT/CONF.IV/L.1). It also proposed

that consideration should be given to the possibility of convening, in 1991 at the latest, a conference on the preparation of an agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty.

Mr. MacKAY (New Zealand) commended the delegation of Nigeria on the proposed agreement it had submitted to the Conference. New Zealand, which was a recipient of legally binding negative security assurances from two nuclear-weapon States, hoped that the improved relations between the nuclear Powers would make it possible to initiate a more constructive dialogue and to find common ground that would be more favourable for negotiations.

If the objective was to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons in self-defence, reference should be made to the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, which derived from customary international law and constituted the very foundation of negative security assurances. The principle of the non-use of force as embodied in Article 2 of the Charter nevertheless had to be seen in the light of Article 51, which provided for the right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurred against a Member of the United Nations. Consequently, any agreement on negative security assurances should be fully in keeping with the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter in order to ensure that the parties to the Treaty did not derogate from principles that were already internationally established. It should also be stressed that in none of the unilateral declarations by the nuclear-weapon States was the connection with the Charter clearly stated. Moreover, Article 51 of the Charter did not specifically deal with the special problems that nuclear weapons posed to world peace and security. However, all five nuclear-weapon States had acknowledged that the use of nuclear weapons in self-defence could be envisaged only in a far more restricted range of circumstances than the use of conventional ones. The common background of the unilateral declarations by those five States had undoubtedly led to Nigeria's proposal for the adoption of a legally binding international instrument.

In setting out the circumstances in which the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States was prohibited, it was important not to approve implicitly the use of such weapons in other circumstances. Negative security assurances should therefore be framed in an appropriately restrictive

context. In that connection, the wording of the first preambular paragraph of the Treaty might be considered relevant in the context of the preamble to an agreement on negative security assurances.

Mr. Deyanov (Bulgaria) took the Chair.

Mr. GROOP (Finland) said that the assurances provided to the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be contained in a legally binding international agreement, whose provisions should be unconditionally and comprehensively respected, and that the States parties to the Treaty that had forgone the nuclear option were entitled to expect unequivocal security assurances. Universal accession to the Treaty would be the soundest form of guarantee. His delegation also fully endorsed the agreement proposed by Nigeria.

The Review Conference offered an opportunity for considerable progress towards nuclear security and it was essential for all States parties to the Treaty, whether nuclear-weapon States or non-nuclear-weapon States, to take part in the process and, in particular, in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The unilateral declarations by nuclear-weapon States were not sufficient fully to meet the expectations of non-nuclear-weapon States and, for that reason, it was to be hoped that, on account of the easing of tensions between the nuclear Powers and the military alliances, the States concerned would be able to overcome their old concerns and provide all the expected security assurances. Moreover, non-nuclear-weapon States that were not parties to the Treaty should be encouraged to renounce the nuclear option so as to facilitate the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement on security assurances. The United Nations was the proper framework for such an agreement and the Conference on Disarmament should make a new start in that direction. Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council could adopt a new resolution in which nuclear-weapon States would not only reaffirm the positive assurances contained in resolution 255 (1968), but would also stengthen their unilateral negative assurances of 1978 and 1982. The proposal made by Egypt in that regard should lead to a far-reaching debate that might strengthen the non-proliferation régime and would thus be a particularly significant step, since the issue of the extension of the Treaty would be dealt with at the next Review Conference in 1995.

Mr. HOULLEZ (Belgium) thanked the delegations of Nigeria and Egypt for the working papers they had submitted. Belgium had always been keenly interested in the issue of effective international arrangements to guarantee non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It considered that the demands of the non-nuclear-weapon States were legitimate and understood the disappointment and discouragement felt on account of the slender achievements of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament. However, even if the unilateral security assurances of the five nuclear Powers were not contained in a single declaration, they were not worthless. The problem was complex, particularly if it was borne in mind that certain States were on the point of acquiring nuclear weapons and assurances should be provided for States that refused to make their commitment to non-proliferation binding. Improvements had to be made, but the question was how. The solution should be sought within a body such as the Conference on Disarmament in which the five nuclear Powers were represented.

Belgium was unable to accept the provisions of article II of the agreement proposed by Nigeria, as they were contrary to the international obligations it had assumed as part of efforts to increase its security.

With regard to paragraph 4 (g) of document NPT/CONF.IV/L.1, his delegation was not sure that a conference designed to conclude an agreement based on Nigeria's and Egypt's proposals was likely to prove more successful than the Conference on Disarmament, which had been trying for 10 years to agree on a common formula. Belgium was, rather, in favour of the intensification of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament (para. 6 (b) of doc. NPT/CONF.IV/L.1).

His delegation would refer in detail to the working paper submitted by Egypt when the French text had been made available. It noted, however, that, in part II of the document, Egypt proposed that the Security Council should be called upon to adopt a new resolution supplementing resolution 255 (1968) and providing for the payment of compensation and assistance to the victim State. His delegation wondered whether it would also be possible to include negative security assurances. Egypt's working paper also drew attention to the danger that nuclear threshold States represented and provided for obligations to ensure the effectiveness of negative security assurances that also concerned nuclear threshold States. As that section supplemented Nigeria's proposal, the two documents should be considered at the same time.

Mr. FLYNN (Ireland) said that the debate on negative security assurances was not a recent one. The lack of credible and effective assurances for States parties could only undermine the non-proliferation Treaty. There was no satisfactory solution to the problem, as the effects of a nuclear war would ignore the boundaries on which such assurances were based. However, some form of negative security assurances was better than none at all.

His delegation looked forward to a constructive debate on that question in Main Committee I. The debate would reflect the differing perceptions of security interests, but it was to be hoped that the States parties to the Treaty would reach an agreement on a proposal designed to improve security assurances. As part of the process of strengthening the non-proliferation régime, new initiatives should be explored to reduce the need to acquire nuclear weapons and to build confidence between States parties.

The most effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was nuclear disarmarment. The statements made during the general debate had reflected the interest in that subject shown by the international community, which hoped that a legally binding international instrument would be drawn up. Those legitimate aspirations and the shared willingness to search for a common approach and to improve the situation were the starting-point for the deliberations in Main Committee I. His delegation would examine very carefully and in a positive spirit the proposals submitted to the Conference on that subject.

Mrs. SOLESBY (United Kingdom), thanking the delegations of Nigeria and Egypt for the proposals they had submitted, recalled that the main objective of the non-proliferation Treaty was security and that all States parties should benefit from the soundest security assurances.

In 1978, the United Kingdom had officially undertaken in Parliament and then at the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty or to other internationally binding commitments, except in the case of an attack on the United Kingdom, its dependent territories, its armed forces or its allies by such a State in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon State. The five nuclear-weapon States had officially given unilateral security assurances. The declarations by those States differed on account of their different national security perceptions and it had so far not been possible to find a single formula.

The United Kingdom considered that article I of the agreement proposed by Nigeria was more limited in scope than the existing British guarantees and did not contain the necessary exclusion clause. Article II excluded those allies of the United Kingdom that allowed other allies to base nuclear weapons on their territories. The Government of the United Kingdom could not accept such discrimination.

However, it agreed with the objectives of Nigeria's proposal and was prepared to continue working on its wording.

She recalled that national assurances were based on national security perceptions and that, consequently, a convergence of wording required convergent perceptions.

The issue of positive security assurances referred to in Egypt's proposal was an important one and it warranted further consideration. In that connection, it should be recalled that Security Council resolution 255 dated from 1968 and it was fair to ask whether circumstances had changed sufficiently to make the adoption of a stronger resolution possible. It should also be stressed that any action by the Security Council in response to the use of nuclear weapons had to be decided in the light of the facts of the case and could not be defined in the abstract. Lastly, any provision on positive security assurances had to take account of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter on the inherent right of self-defence.

Her delegation also feared that certain States with significant unsafeguarded nuclear facilities might have acquired nuclear weapons. Only their accession to the Treaty and appropriate verification measures could dispel such fears. The Conference should make that point strongly in its final declaration.

Mr. WEMBOU (Cameroon) said that the proposal made by Nigeria on negative security assurances was interesting for three reasons. First of all, from the political point of view, it was designed to balance the obligations assumed by all parties under the NPT. Secondly, from the legal point of view, it was intended to make up for the lack of binding commitments by the Depositary States, which were nuclear-weapon States, vis-à-vis the other parties to the Treaty. It was also intended to supplement and expand on the principle of the non-use of force in international relations. Lastly, from the practical point of view, it was designed to restore the confidence of

non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty by giving them the guarantees they were legitimately entitled to claim and it helped to enhance the Treaty's credibility.

The value of unilateral declarations was, of course, recognized. But the legal scope of unilateral declarations and of multilateral treaties was quite different. His delegation therefore supported the idea of convening a conference on the issue in 1991 at the latest.

The right of self-defence enunciated in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations was recognized for all States and it was entirely legitimate for States and the nuclear-weapon Powers to refer to that Article. He wondered, however, what that right meant for States which, in becoming parties to the NPT, had forgone the nuclear option, which would have been a means of ensuring their self defence.

The Egyptian proposal on positive security assurances was important and his delegation would make detailed comments in the Working Group that was to consider the issue. For the time being, it merely noted that, if account had to be taken of a threat that emanated not only from the five nuclear Powers, but also from other States that had reached a certain threshold, that would indicate that there had been some vertical proliferation and that some States had thus strengthened their military capability. Working Group 1, which was responsible for reviewing articles I and II of the Treaty, as well as the third preambular paragraph, might be able to find a formula which would recognize the encouraging declarations of the Depositary States, but also make it possible to reflect the idea of, and concern about, vertical proliferation.

As to article VI, his delegation did not think that the problem was one of determining which group of States had or had not fulfilled its obligations under that article. It was well known that, despite the progress made in bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations, the States parties had not properly fulfilled their obligations. The problem was thus to decide which measure had to be recommended to ensure that article VI operated more satisfactorily in future.

In that context, the proposals put forward by the non-aligned countries relating to a nuclear-test-ban treaty and a provisional moratorium took on their full importance and significance. His delegation was of the opinion that Working Group 3 should look at those proposals carefully and consider them with an open mind and without pre-conditions on the part of any delegation, since the common objective was to strengthen the non-proliferation régime.

Mr. BOZY (Hungary) said that, like most non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, his country had fulfilled its obligations under the Treaty because it believed that the nuclear-weapon States would undertake not to threaten the non-nuclear-weapon States. He welcomed the fact that the nuclear-weapon States had mentioned negative security assurances during the general debate, but he regretted that the advantages offered by those unilateral declarations did not meet expectations. That was attributable to the differences in wording, and above all to the lack of a common approach to the basic issues relating to those negative assurances.

Hungary nevertheless shared the view expressed by Nigeria and Egypt in favour of a legally binding international commitment by nuclear-weapon States prohibiting the use of such weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States which were parties to the Treaty and whose territory was completely free of nuclear weapons.

In view of the far-reaching changes taking place in international relations, account had to be taken of the legitimate needs of States that had forgone the nuclear option. Accordingly, his delegation was prepared to contribute to the success of the Committee's work.

Mr. GORDON (United States of America) said that the question of assurances of the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT was of fundamental importance. In 1978, the United States Government had provided solemn assurances that had been confirmed by successive administrations and, more recently, within the framework of the Review Conference. His delegation had listened with interest to all the opinions expressed in the general debate on that issue, which had been on the agenda for many years. The problem was to find common wording for the assurances given by each of the five nuclear States, which were permanent members of the Security Council and the only States defined as nuclear-weapon States under the NPT. It had unfortunately not yet been possible to find a common formula acceptable to all the States concerned.

His country was still prepared to try to find a solution to that problem. It appreciated the efforts of Nigeria and Egypt to consider the issue in greater depth and would comment on Nigeria's proposal within the framework of the Sub-Committee on Security Assurances. It would also consider Egypt's proposal and endorsed the comments that Belgium and the United Kingdom had made on it.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply, he said that the obligations under the Treaty were solemn undertakings that could not and must not be subject to any concession on any point. His Government considered that any such concessions were an unacceptable affront to the Treaty.

Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) noted with satisfaction that the proposals by Nigeria and Egypt indicated a convergence of views. The overall objective was to find a legally binding commitment which would strengthen both positive and negative security assurances. Far from being incompatible, the two proposals were complementary. Egypt's proposal went beyond Nigeria's and attempted to extend assurances to include not only States parties to the NPT, but also other Powers and particularly the threshold States that constituted a direct threat.

The need for security assurances was the result of the fact that non-nuclear-weapon States that renounced nuclear weapons required assurances to protect their interests.

A framework of security assurances already existed. Articles 2, 4 and 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, together with Security Council resolution 255 (1968) and the Rarotonga and Tlatelolco Treaties, set out specific commitments by the parties in respect of security assurances. With regard to positive security assurances, resolution 255 (1968) was not sufficient. Despite five abstentions, including that of France, a nuclear-weapon State, that resolution did not place enough emphasis on the extent of the nuclear threat and did not define the nature of defensive measures. It also did not refer to the sanctions provided for in Article 42. It referred mainly to "intentions". The elements necessary to achieve a binding commitment were therefore lacking.

As far as negative security assurances were concerned, the unilateral declarations by the five nuclear-weapon States revealed certain differences in the scope of the commitments and the legal reservations. The overall picture was one of insecurity and a lack of uniformity. It was thus necessary to find a single and far more categorical formula for assurances.

It was well known that, although the issue had always been on the agenda of many forums, no solution had been found. The reasons were that, despite many positive intentions, the current situation, with its changing security scenarios as a result of rapprochement between the super-Powers, East-West relations and greater security in Europe, also had a negative side.

Multipolarity, the intensification of regional conflicts, ethnic and linguistic rivalries and other factors could bring about unexpected situations from the viewpoint, inter alia, of the use of nuclear weapons. Progress had to be made on that issue, which had been under consideration for more than two decades without much success.

Mr. KAREM (Egypt) said that his country was proposing that the Conference should invite the United Nations Security Council to adopt a new resolution on security assurances. The proposed resolution should include credible assurances that went beyond the provisions of resolution 255 (1968).

Mr. HADDAH (Syrian Arabic Republic) noted with satisfaction that all speakers, whether from nuclear-weapon States or non-nuclear-weapon States, had without exception expressed their support for the objective set in the proposals by Nigeria and Egypt. Ways had to be found of achieving that basic objective, which was to provide the necessary assurances for the parties to the non-proliferation Treaty. He considered that the assurances in Egypt's proposal were broader in scope than those proposed by Nigeria and he therefore hoped that all the elements in Egypt's proposal would receive the support and approval of the Review Conference.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.